

Message Text

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TO USLO PEKING

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY SUVA

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

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AMEMBASSY MANILA
CINCPAC HONOLULU HAWAII 0000

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NOFORN CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR, VM, UR

SUBJECT: HANOI AND MOSCOW: HOW FAR TOWARDS ALLIANCE?

FOLLOWING IS INR ANALYSIS OF JULY 5 FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

CHINESE HOSTILITY AND VIETNAMESE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES ARE NOW FORCING VIETNAM TO LEAN MORE TOWARD THE USSR. BUT DESPITE MORE INTERESTS IN COMMON WITH THE SOVIET UNION, HANOI WILL NOT SUBORDINATE ITSELF TO THE SOVIET UNION. MOSCOW SEES CLOSER TIES WITH HANOI, IN PART, AS A "VIETNAM CARD" TO COUNTER CHINA'S IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH THE US AND JAPAN. A SOVIET MILITARY AND NAVAL PRESENCE IN VIETNAM IS NOT YET A REALITY, DESPITE CHINESE CLAIMS, BUT IT IS A GROWING POSSIBILITY.

HANOI'S VIEW OF CHINA

HANOI HAS TRIED OVER THE YEARS TO BALANCE ITS TIES WITH CHINA AND THE USSR, BUT THE VIETNAMESE CONSIDER CHINA THE TRADITIONAL FOE. THEY HAVE RESENTED PEKING'S:

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--ITS INTERFERENCE WITH THE TRANSPORT OF SOVIET AID THROUGH CHINA DURING THE WAR;

--ITS SEIZURE OF THE DISPUTED PARACEL ISLANDS IN 1974; AND

--MORE RECENTLY AND MOST PARTICULARLY, ITS SUPPORT FOR CAMBODIA; THIS SUPPORT HAS THWARTED HANOI'S ASPIRATIONS FOR PARAMOUNTCY IN ALL OF INDOCHINA AND HAS ENCOURAGED CAMBODIA IN THE BORDER WAR THAT IS SO COSTLY TO VIETNAM'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS.

THUS, THE PRESENT OPEN QUARREL WITH CHINA REFLECTS HISTORICALLY BASED EMOTIONS AND FEARS WHICH CUT ACROSS IDEOLOGY AND STATEMENTS OF FRATERNAL AMITY.

HANOI'S VIEW OF THE USSR

VIETNAM HAS FOUND THE SOVIETS MORE SATISFACTORY THAN THE CHINESE TO DEAL WITH. THIS IS TRUE EVEN THOUGH THE VIETNAMESE DO NOT PARTICULARLY LIKE THE RUSSIANS, RESENTED SOME SOVIET MOVES AT THEIR EXPENSE (E.G., GREETING NIXON

AFTER THE MINING OF HAIPHONG HARBOR IN 1972), AND FELT THAT THE USSR SHOULD HAVE SUPPLIED BETTER WEAPONRY THAN IT DID. STILL, THE SOVIETS WERE FAR MORE GENEROUS WITH AID DURING THE WAR THAN WERE THE CHINESE; HANOI DEPENDED HEAVILY ON MODERN SOVIET WEAPONRY FOR ITS AIR DEFENSE AND GROUND OFFENSE.

THE SOVIETS ALSO HAVE MADE FEW DEMANDS OF VIETNAM IN RETURN. MOREOVER, IDEOLOGICALLY, HANOI IS CLOSER TO MOSCOW'S BRAND OF MARXISM-LENINISM THAN TO PEKING'S. FINALLY, INASMUCH AS CHINA HAS STOPPED ITS AID TO VIETNAM (ABOUT 350 MILLION DOLLARS IN 1977), THE SOVIET UNION HAS BECOME AN EVEN MORE IMPORTANT SOURCE FOR ECONOMIC AID.

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MOSCOW'S VIEW OF VIETNAM

THE SOVIETS' GENEROUS SUPPORT FOR VIETNAM IS PAYING OFF AT A TIME WHEN THEY ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT CHINA'S ANTI-SOVIET EFFORTS AND ITS TURN TO THE WEST. MOSCOW APPARENTLY FEELS A GENUINE CONCERN OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF A GROWING ALIGNMENT OF CHINA WITH JAPAN AND THE US AS SUGGESTED BY DR. BRZEZINSKI'S RECENT REMARKS IN PEKING AND BY JAPAN'S INCLINATION TO ACCEPT AN ANTI-HEGEMONY CLAUSE IN A PEACE TREATY WITH CHINA. THE USSR CERTAINLY HOPES THAT ITS SUPPORT FOR VIETNAM--AN EMOTIONALLY ANTI-CHINESE COUNTRY WITH A TOUGH AND MODERN ARMY--WILL WORRY CHINA.

THE SOVIET PRESENCE IN VIETNAM

THERE ARE ESTIMATED TO BE SOME 2,000-3,000 SOVIETS IN VIETNAM, OF WHOM ONLY A FRACTION ARE MILITARY PERSONNEL ENGAGED IN TRAINING AND LIAISON. LARGE NUMBERS OF VIETNAMESE CIVIL AND MILITARY CADRE HAVE GONE TO THE USSR AND EAST EUROPE FOR ADVANCED TRAINING, AND HIGH-LEVEL VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS HAVE OFTEN VISITED THE USSR.

IN RECENT YEARS THE USSR HAS BEEN GIVING VIETNAM ABOUT 500 MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR IN ECONOMIC AID; THE EAST EUROPEANS GIVE AN ADDITIONAL 400 MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR, AND AID COMMITMENTS--NOT DISBURSEMENTS--FROM NON-COMMUNIST DONORS HAVE TOTALED ABOUT 500 MILLION DOLLARS ANNUALLY SINCE 1976. WE BELIEVE THAT MOSCOW HAS GIVEN HANOI RELATIVELY LITTLE MILITARY AID SINCE THE WAR BECAUSE THE VIETNAMESE HAVE NOT NEEDED IT.

WE HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE CHINESE CHARGES

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THAT THE SOVIETS ALREADY HAVE MAJOR BASES AT CAM RANH BAY AND ELSEWHERE. IT SHOULD BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOVIETS COULD QUICKLY ESTABLISH A MILITARY PRESENCE IN VIETNAM IF THEY WERE ASKED TO DO SO. THE MANY SOVIET ADVISORS IN VIETNAM HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY SURVEYED THE AVAILABLE FACILITIES. MANY FORMER AMERICAN INSTALLATIONS IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH VIETNAM, SUCH AS CAN RANH, COULD QUICKLY BE MADE OPERATIONAL. ALSO, ELEMENTS OF THE SOVIET PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN FLEETS COULD BE ON STATION IN VIETNAMESE WATERS WITHIN A MATTER OF DAYS.

HOW CLOSE WILL MOSCOW AND HANOI GET?

A SENIOR SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL TOLD AN EMBASSY MOSCOW OFFICER ON JUNE 22 THAT THE USSR HAS NO INTENTION OF INTERVENING MILITARILY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA OR OF FILLING THE VACUUM LEFT BY THE CESSATION OF CHINESE AID TO VIETNAM. DESPITE SUCH OFFICIAL DENIALS, WE BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIETS SEE A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH VIETNAM AS ONE OF THE BEST COUNTERS THEY NOW HAVE AGAINST CHINA. THE SAME OFFICIAL NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD UNDERTAKE "COUNTERMOVES" TO THE US "PLAYING OF THE CHINA CARD." BREZHNEV ON JUNE 28 PUBLICLY PROCLAIMED MOSCOW'S "RESOLUTE SUPPORT" FOR VIETNAM AT A TIME WHEN THE VIETNAMESE, HE SAID, ARE BEING "SUBJECTED TO RUDE AND UNJUST OUTSIDE PRESSURE."

RECENTLY VIETNAM HAS MOVED OPENLY TOWARD THE USSR BY OFFICIALLY JOINING CEMA AFTER YEARS OF BEING ONLY AN OBSERVER. ON HIS WAY TO THE RECENT CEMA MEETING, VICE PREMIER LE THAN NGHI, AS USUAL, STOPPED IN MOSCOW, WHERE HE MAY HAVE TALKED ABOUT INCREASED AID, WHICH SHOULD RESULT FROM CEMA MEMBERSHIP.

DESPITE THE ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS, WE BELIEVE THAT HANOI WILL NOT MOVE HASTILY IN EXPANDING TIES WITH MOSCOW,

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PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO A SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE. AS FOR THE USSR, WE BELIEVE THAT IT WILL SHAPE ITS MILITARY MOVES SO AS TO AVOID ALARMING THE ASEAN STATES AND TO LIMIT THE REACTION FROM CHINA AND THE US. THUS, MOSCOW'S FIRST STEPS MIGHT INCLUDE "GOODWILL" VISITS TO VIETNAM BY SOVIET NAVAL VESSELS AND A QUIET BUILD-UP THERE OF SOVIET ADVISORS AND LIAISON PERSONNEL.

EVEN IF BASE FACILITIES ARE GRANTED TO MOSCOW, HANOI WILL NOT SURRENDER ITS CONTROL AND WILL DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN OTHER OPTIONS. IT WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK OUTSIDE TRADE, ASSISTANCE, AND BETTER RELATIONS WITH JAPAN, INDIA, WEST EUROPE, ASEAN, AND EVEN THE US. CHRISTOPHER

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